



**PLANNING COMMISSION WORKSESSION
MINUTES
JUNE 17, 2009
7:00 PM
CITY OF FREDERICKSBURG
715 PRINCESS ANNE STREET
COUNCIL CHAMBER**

COMMISSION MEMBERS

**Edward F. Whelan, Chair
Roy McAfee, Vice Chair
Ricardo Rigual
Berkley Mitchell**

CITY STAFF

**Raymond P. Ocel, Jr., Director
Planning & Community Dev.
Debra M. Ward, Zoning Officer
Erik Nelson, Senior Planner**

CALL TO ORDER

The June 17, 2009 Planning Commission worksession was called to order at 7:00 p.m. for a discussion on adding small scale retail to the fringes of residential areas.

Mr. Ocel began by explaining that the meeting was directed at residents of the Maury and Fairview neighborhoods. Mr. Ocel explained the City's Comprehensive Plan and how it is used in planning. He said the discussion would focus on residential areas that already have or have had in the past nonresidential uses in or around the neighborhood.

Opening remarks were given by Roy McAfee. Mr. McAfee recommended that everyone read the City's Comprehensive Plan which is used to guide all development decisions. He also recommended the JumpStart Plan which is available for developers, to see what the City envisions and where development and/or redevelopment are recommended.

Mr. McAfee referenced the downtown district and how its mixed use is successful. Currently the City only has a mixed use for developments of 2 acres or more. Up to the mid to late 1960's residents had the ability to grocery shop, get their lawn mower repaired or get a haircut without having to use a motor vehicle. Those conveniences changed when zoning ordinances began to separate commercial and industrial uses from residential areas.

Mr. McAfee suggested that certain corridors such as Princess Anne Street, William Street and Lafayette Boulevard could support a return to mixed use. He also proposed that the Canal has future potential to be developed in such a way as to attract tourists to the City similar to San Antonio, Texas and its Riverwalk.

Mr. McAfee put forward the notion that adding small scale commercial uses to residential areas is a way to create a lifestyle that does not require residents to go out onto main roadways for everyday types of services and goods.

The type of feedback the Planning Commission is looking for from residents includes:

- What are the uses residents want or do not want?
- Where should nonresidential uses be placed?
- Do residents even want mixed uses in their neighborhoods?

Mr. Ocel explained that the Commission was not looking at neighborhoods such as Confederate Ridge or Braehead since those neighborhoods have never had commercial uses. The neighborhoods being looked at are those close to the downtown area.

Anne Little asked if certain blocks could be targeted or even particular properties. She also wanted to know if regulations could be put into place to regulate design, etc. Ms. Little also asked that the Commission take green development into consideration when writing the ordinance.

Mr. McAfee responded that landscape design was an important part of mixed use ordinances.

Judith Minoff said she felt appearance was important and that the Commission should look at the potential for development along the river.

Mr. Nelson explained that nothing could be built along the river due to the floodplain and that is why areas along the river are mainly parking areas.

Mr. McAfee said he felt that portions of the canal could be used in a manner similar to San Antonio's riverwalk.

A member of the public expressed the idea that many of the pocket parks throughout the City were not being fully utilized. She said that in Minneapolis shoppers do not have to leave the park areas in order to shop or walk the City.

Richard Ross said he did not want bars or bakeries in neighborhood areas. These uses would bring delivery trucks and additional traffic. He urged the Commission to be selective in the approval of uses and business hours of operation.

Mr. McAfee mentioned that when making decisions one of the factors that would be looked at would be emissions such as noise, odor, etc. If the ordinance requires nonresidential uses to obtain a Special Use Permit (SUP) then conditions can be placed on the use.

David Danielli questioned whether the ordinance would have uniformity. An example given was if restaurants had limited hours, would all restaurants have the same hours of operation.

Mr. McAfee answered that there should be uniform regulations but that each SUP should also be looked at individually.

Ms. Minoff recommended that adaptive re-use of old buildings should be encouraged. She said she was against limitations being placed on businesses that required them to close early.

Mr. McAfee said the Planning Commission needed to find ways to encourage re-use of old buildings while still meeting building code regulations.

Steven Gray brought up the fact that he loves the downtown and the ability to walk everywhere. He said he advocates having a core residential area with commercial uses on the perimeter.

Ms. Minoff suggested that regulations for the use of signage be looked at. She also said she would not want to live next door to a commercial building; commercial uses should remain on the perimeter of neighborhoods.

Ms. Little asked if the City could relegate certain uses in certain areas.

Mr. Ocel said that at a previous meeting the Planning Commission looked at creating a tiered approach to uses – from the least intense to the most intense uses.

Mr. McAfee offered that the ordinance should be flexible enough to allow someone to present their project no matter where it is located in respect to the residential areas. He also thinks adaptive re-use of buildings should be encouraged.

Mr. Gray pointed out that businesses in residential areas would attract vehicles.

Mr. Nelson strongly urged that neighborhoods not be disrupted by the addition of commercial uses. He said that home occupations are already permitted with certain restrictions.

Ms. Little said she advocates permeable pavement and vegetative buffers.

Mr. Ocel reminded the audience that the City's Low Impact Development ordinance would be going before City Council the following week.

Bill Sherman echoed Mr. Gray's comments and said he would like to see more flexibility than others might like in order for the mixed uses to be successful. Mr. Sherman said the ordinance must be done creatively, allowing someone with an idea to be able to make their case. He said perhaps a time limit could be placed on SUPs to allow for re-reviews periodically. Mr. Sherman said requiring things like a traffic impact analysis would be too costly for a small business and those types of requirements should be avoided.

Mr. Ocel summed up the meeting by saying that the Planning Commission and staff were using these types of public meetings to gather input before attempting to put an ordinance on paper.

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 PM.



Edward F. Whelan, III, Chair

